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SPEECH BEFORE BOSTON COLLEGE SEMINAR - OCTOBER 27, 1964

The previous speakers have told you about the past, the present, or the hoped-for future of my home town, the Back Bay Area of Boston. The fact that I was born there, and have spent most of my business life working from or within the area, may have something to do with my being on this platform today.

I remember the trolley cars on Boylston Street all the way to Washington Street. I remember trolleys on Beacon Street from Massachusetts Avenue to Kenmore Square. That's why I was born there, near Charlesgate East. Father was a doctor with a good sense of location. He lived and had an office right by a trolley stop.

Enough for nostalgia. The impact of the automobile, and the ease of country living, have changed the character of the old Back Bay residential neighborhood. We have increased the numbers of people and changed the methods of transportation so that night and day we are harassed by cars, standing still or moving, and by people using old homes for uses which sometimes create high unit real estate values, but lower overall neighborhood values through noise or other nuisance.

We have also seen a complete transformation in land uses on the southerly side of Boylston Street. This influence has changed the aspect of Newbury Street and had a tremendous economic impact on values, human and economic, on the whole area.

And now - Prudential Center, and the Turnpike. It is obvious to all of us that the new wines of the late nineteen hundreds cannot comfortably fit into the old bottles of the late eighteen-hundreds, without some intensive study and intelligent planning.

This is no sudden problem for Boston, or for any other major dynamic city in the United States. We have recognized it here in our massive Urban Renewal Program, so ably led by Mayor Collins, the Redevelopment Authority under the Chairmanship of Father Lally and Ed Logue.

Certain areas, such as the Waterfront and the Central City Business District have already gone far in producing, by joint efforts of business and public agencies. Plans for revitalizing and rebuilding centers of great economic vitality have been completed, or will soon be.

Because of its comparative newness, and its obviously dynamic attraction for economic enterprise, the Back Bay could by no stretch of the imagination be classified as ready for standard urban renewal treatment.

And yet, the signs of early decay have become obvious to the keen observers of trends. They are spelled out in detail in the report which is today submitted to you.

A year and a half ago, a few leaders, under the sponsorship of the Back Bay Association, decided to undertake a thorough exploration of present conditions, with the sole purpose of preparing a blueprint for future constructive action. I have had the privilege of serving as Chairman of a small committee of interested business and institutional leaders who have guided the production of a complete blueprint for action. We are proud to present the report prepared by Spencer Hurtt Associates to the Greater Boston Community.

This report presents to all of us an opportunity and a challenge. In the ordinary sense of the term, it is not a proposed, quote, "Redevelopment program," unquote. Its title is - "A Program to Shape a Future in Back Bay." And I should add, on my own, a future of usefulness and beauty. Such a plan was executed for the past generation by our far-sighted forbears.

The need is well expressed in the report itself, and again I quote from it:

"As a direct result of the completion of the Prudential Center, the Turnpike Extension and other major development plans, the need for planning is especially urgent. Back Bay is an economically viable area, it does not need pump-priming and government subsidies to spur its development. To make use of the many assets of the Back Bay so that each of the residential, business and institutional interests can share in the development which is sure to come, we must establish common goals and objectives, and prepare a mutually acceptable land use plan and a traffic and parking plan."

The three major uses, are, as previously pointed out, Residential, Institutional, and Commercial. A plan had to be devised which would use the talents and resources of all three groups to produce a mutually acceptable program.

To accomplish this, there have been created two new non-profit entities -- the Back Bay Council, Inc., and the Back Bay Research, Planning & Development Corporation.

The Council will be made up of representatives of all the existing associations -- Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay, the Back Bay Association (largely business-oriented), St. Botolph Association, Massachusetts Avenue Board of Trade; and institutional members, such as Schools, Boston Public Library, Universities, and the Christian Science Church. The Council will

act as a policy-making and advisory body. It will represent the entire area in dealings with the City, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the residential and business occupants of Back Bay.

The Research, Planning, and Development Corporation will be the action organization to carry out the blueprint which we are now presenting. It will be made up of those individuals who through contributions of working time, and cash contributions, develop and finally propose the eventual courses of action.

It will adopt a budget, raise money, hire consultants, and work on a daily basis with the Boston Redevelopment Authority. It will have an executive director to coordinate its efforts, and sufficient staff to be a continuing liaison with the Back Bay Community, the consultants, and the various departments of municipal governments which will have a vital interest in the success of the venture.

The preliminary budget as outlined in the report calls for the expenditure of \$240,000 over a three-year period. What happens after that will depend entirely on the results of the first two phases.

The first phase will be a thorough analysis of the problems and possibilities; the second phase will consist of recommendations for specific courses of action.

Consultants have been contacted; and the report, endorsed by the study committee, recommends the immediate employment of the following individuals and firms when funds are in sight.

<u>Profession</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Planning:	(1) Dr. David Wallace (2) Adams, Howard, and Opperman	Philadelphia Cambridge
Traffic and Parking:	Barton - Aschman	Chicago
Economics, Market and Real Estate:	Hunter	Miami
Architecture:	Hugh Stubbins	Cambridge
Landscape Architecture:	Don Wiley	Charlotte, Vermont
Structural Engineers: (as a team)	William DeMessumier Industrial Estimat- ing Service David Mathoff	Boston Boston Boston
Law (zoning):	John Bok	Boston

The overall cost for the consultants' services as projected is \$135,000.

The cost of operating the Back Bay Research, Planning, and Development Corporation is estimated at \$36,000 per annum for the first two years, and \$33,000 for the third year.

Phases A and B should be substantially completed, and reviewed by the Back Bay Council, in 18 months from "B. B. day." ("B. B. Day" is when organization is complete and funds are in sight.) B. B. Day, I hope, will be January 1, 1965. This, strangely enough, is almost exactly 100 years after the first plans for the original filling-in of the Back Bay were completed.

Now for those of you who have been mentally computing your particular share of \$240,000, I have good news.

Because Back Bay is a part of the City of Boston today, the Boston Redevelopment Authority has recognized its responsibility to participate in this study as a part of its overall planning program. I believe that there will be a recommendation to its members that, because of the public nature and public benefits of the proposed program, somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 per cent of the consultants fees should be provided by the Authority. There will also be a major contribution in planning staff time, plus the availability of data and statistics already compiled in connection with the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan for the area.

This joint use of public and private talents presents a unique advantage to both parties to the agreement. The City, for a relatively small cash outlay, gets the benefit of the energies of the citizen group and the major portion of the financial resources provided from private sources.

The Back Bay citizen effort gets expert guidance from the highly competent BRA staff as well as a substantial cash contribution.

Without getting into the Why's and Wherefore's, or even the basic philosophy of rugged individualism in the 20th Century, I am convinced that only by such joint private and public ventures, can the dynamics of our cities be restored to their former vigor.

I am privileged to announce that Erwin D. Canham has agreed to serve as President of our Back Bay Council, and..... have undertaken to lead the efforts of the Development Corporation. A thoroughly competent and experienced executive director is, I believe, available when sufficient financial pledges have been received.

The four contributors to the fund of \$20,000 which made this blueprint possible have pledged their continued support. Many others have assured us that they consider this program so dynamic, stimulating, and necessary, that we are confident of an early start under full steam.

As a preliminary and concrete example of this type of constructive work which has been proposed, the Back Bay Research, Planning & Development Corporation will shortly announce a limited architectural contest for the rebuilding of Copley Square. The Mayor has requested us to be the sponsors, and assume the cost of, choosing the best possible plan for the transformation of what is now a pair of triangles, into a new and beautiful Copley Square, in the most literal sense. The City will provide the funds for its execution.

It would be remiss of me to close without referring to the Boston City Council order of April 6, 1964, which has set up the "Back Bay Historic District Study Committee."

This committee, which has been appointed by His Honor, Mayor Collins, is first to make an investigation as to the establishment under the Historic Districts Act of an historic district for that part of the residential area bounded by the Center line of Beacon Street, by a line 150 feet West of Arlington Street, the alley between Newbury Street and Commonwealth Avenue, and by a line 150 feet East of Charlesgate East; and second, to report "on the historic significance of the buildings, structures, features, sites, and surroundings in any historic district such Committee may propose for the whole or any part of approximately such area."

The Back Bay Council, should, I believe, as its first order of business, instruct the Back Bay Planning, Research and Development Corporation to offer its services to the already appointed committee. This would be a concrete and progressive step toward incorporating the

study within the framework of the overall development plans for the entire area.

Fellow citizens of Boston, you have heard our program. We seek your support at all levels to make the entire Back Bay what it once was, and will be again -- the architectural and economic pride of our city.

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